

two Democratic Presidents. I couldn't agree more with Mr. Summers.

Democrats learned the wrong lesson from the financial crisis in 2008. They thought the recovery was slow because the government spent too little. They have been determined to spend much more this time around. The economic recovery from the pandemic was already well underway when the Democrats passed their massive stimulus in March—\$1.9 trillion.

Thanks to the bipartisan emergency relief bills passed under President Trump, the economy had stabilized by yearend. We were in the middle of the most rapid economic recovery on record, but the Democrats' out-of-control spending is putting the recovery at risk, and it is the American families who will pay the price in the end.

In addition to a reckless monetary policy, they want to raise taxes on all of us, including small businesses and family farms, to fund this spending spree. They want to undo the Tax and Jobs Cuts Act passed by the Senate Republicans and signed into law by President Trump.

These Republican tax cuts helped create the best economy in a generation. They created countless opportunities for hard-working Americans. Unemployment was at historic lows. Blue-collar wages rose faster than white-collar wages for the first time in history.

If they repeal the Republican tax cuts, Democrats will be encouraging American companies to move overseas. Job creators will have to pay more taxes at the same time as they are recovering from the pandemic, and the tax increases being proposed will be passed on to working Americans in the form of higher prices and lower wages.

In fact, the only people Democrats want to lower taxes for are the people who are high earners in New York, California, and New Jersey. Higher taxes, combined with the Democrats' inflation, would be a one-two knockout punch of our Nation's economic recovery.

It only takes one match to start a brush fire. Rather than taking commonsense steps to fight inflation, Democrats are preparing for it by dumping lighter fluid on the entire field. President Biden styles himself as the second coming of FDR, but he is looking more like Jimmy Carter every day.

Americans my age will remember Carter's Presidency and how tough those times were for working families. I hope we can avoid repeating history, but that means we need to take action, and we need to take action now. I urge my Democratic colleagues to reexamine their misplaced priorities and keep pro-worker tax and spending policies in place.

Let's work together on practical ways to get our economy and our country back to work.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, during the first 4 months of 2021, more than half a million migrants have crossed our southern border—a half a million—including more than 50,000 unaccompanied children. Now, nobody really believes that those children got there all by themselves. The truth is, they have been smuggled to the border and crossed the border only to be picked up by Border Patrol, taken care of, as we would all hope they would be, and ultimately be placed with U.S. sponsors. I will have more to say about that in a moment.

In the same period of time last year, there were fewer than 125 migrants who crossed our border, including just over 10,000 children—half a million so far this year, 125,000 last year, 50,000 children so far this year, 10,000 last year during the same period of time. Put simply, this is not normal, nor should it be the standard operating procedure for the U.S. Government. The truth is, our country lacks the facilities, the personnel, the resources, and the policies to handle this sort of influx of humanity in a humane way.

Back in March, the President tapped Vice President HARRIS to handle the border crisis, but we have seen no progress to date. In fact, the Vice President, I believe, is in Guatemala today, and she hasn't even been to our southern border. She hasn't visited the facilities where tens of thousands of migrant children have been cared for. And she hasn't listened to the migrants' horrifying stories of how they were treated by the human smugglers that brought them to the border.

We do know the Vice President is finally hitting the trail this week to talk about the border crisis. But that seems to be all it is, is talk. The only problem is, she is not visiting the border. She is not even in her home State of California, which has a border with Mexico. She is in Guatemala.

As law enforcement, nongovernmental organizations, and border communities are being overwhelmed by the surge of migration, the Vice President is meeting with foreign leaders. Now, there is nothing inherently wrong about meeting with foreign leaders, but, surely, she can't think that a conversation with the President of Guatemala is going to solve the human crisis at our border.

The Border Patrol will tell you, as they have told me, mass migration like this is a product of two different actions. One is the so-called push factors, which means people who lack economic opportunity; maybe they are fleeing violence; maybe they just want to come to America to be reunited with some other relatives; and certainly the

human smugglers are more than happy at \$5,000, and more, a head to help them. But these smugglers, as I intimated a moment ago, are a part of transnational criminal organizations that care nothing for these migrants. They just care about the money. And what they do is they flood the border with unaccompanied children, for example, taking as many as 40 percent of the Border Patrol off the frontlines in the war against illegal drugs coming across the border. And when the Border Patrol is not there—surprise, surprise—the very drugs that contributed to the loss of about 80,000 lives last year in America alone come flowing across, whether it is heroin or cocaine or artificial opioids. You name it, it is coming across the border by the same people who are moving the migrants across the border. Again, they are commodity agnostic. They will do anything for a buck, and they care nothing about the migrants at all.

Well, imagine calling 9-1-1 when your home is on fire and watching as they hose down your neighbor's house instead. That is what it feels like watching the Vice President down in Central America.

For years, the United States has tried to address the crime and corruption in Central America with very limited success. Do they have some modest role in the crisis? Well, yes, but that is hardly where the Vice President's attention should be focused right now. Particularly, she should be focused—and the President focused—on working with us on policies that Congress would pass that would mitigate this humanitarian crisis.

Former Senator HARRIS's list of legislative accomplishments and her experience solving complex policy problems is not particularly deep. But rather than be critical, I would like to offer a suggestion.

In April, Senator SINEMA—the Senator from Arizona—and I introduced the Bipartisan Border Solutions Act to address this unfettered flow of migration. She is concerned about Arizona; I am concerned about Texas. But the truth is, I am concerned about America writ large.

We have been proud to work in a bicameral way, too, with two of our friends on the other side of the Capitol: Congressman HENRY CUELLAR, a Democrat from Laredo, TX; and TONY GONZALES, from the 23rd congressional district. The four of us live in and represent border States and districts. We have spent time—a lot of time—listening and learning from the men and women who are committed to safeguarding our border and those who care for the migrants and those who live in these border communities.

There are a lot of people out there who will talk about what is happening at the border who have never actually been there, so how in the world would they possibly know? They inaccurately characterize border communities as unsafe, lawless places. That is not true.

They villainize the Border Patrol and other law enforcement Agencies like ICE, Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Remember the “Abolish ICE” slogan? They are criticizing these public servants for actually enforcing the laws that Congress has passed. Congress passed those laws. These brave men and women are simply executing the laws that Congress itself has passed.

Well, unfortunately, there is a lot of talk here in Washington by people who offer blanket solutions that have nothing to do, or very little, with solving the complex problems that exist. The fact of the matter is, my State of 29 million people has a beautiful, safe, and vibrant border region. I was there last Wednesday, last. The men and women who lead and protect these communities are doing everything they can to fairly and humanely respond to the crisis. But they are being overwhelmed, and they are not getting much help from the Federal Government.

The same is true across our entire southern border. At her invitation, I visited Tucson last Tuesday, a very different border region than we visited on Wednesday, where Senator SINEMA came to McAllen, at my request, in the Rio Grande Valley.

I appreciate her and her staff taking the time to learn more about the differences in the border in my State from her State. And I certainly learned a lot by traveling to Tucson and meeting with her constituents.

In Arizona, we visited a soft-sided Customs and Border Protection facility where migrants are processed, and the Tucson sector chief talked about the broad responsibilities his agents have in these facilities.

As I suggested a moment ago, normally, the Border Patrol is responsible for patrolling the border. That is why they call them the Border Patrol. But now they are encountering unaccompanied children and have to leave those frontlines—about 40 percent of them—just to take care of them at these CBP, Customs and Border Protection, facilities.

Well, we need the Border Patrol on the border, patrolling the border so they can deal with everything from encountering a child abandoned by human smugglers to a tractor full of human trafficking victims. They might, and will and do, interdict drugs, weapons, money, or any of a number of contraband being smuggled across the border. Again, as some wise person coined the phrase “commodity agnostic,” these transnational criminal organizations that really bring people into the United States from worldwide locations but principally from Mexico and Central America—all they care about is the money.

In the Tucson sector alone, 103 agents were pulled from the field because somebody needed to take care of the migrants. Now they are doing everything from changing diapers to

serving meals, to supervising playtime for the children—103 law enforcement officers in the Tucson sector alone who should be stopping dangerous people and dangerous substances from entering our country instead of acting as caretakers and not creating serious gaps in our border security.

Of course, the cartels—these criminal organizations—are pretty smart. This is actually part of their business model. They know that if they flood the border with unaccompanied children, for example, the Border Patrol is going to leave huge gaps that are then going to be exploited by the drug smugglers.

They know about the vulnerabilities that exist on our border. They know about our laws and policies, and they are actively exploiting them. And we are basically letting them. Shame on us.

In the Rio Grande Valley last week, we spoke with a number of law enforcement and community leaders, including the National Border Patrol Council president, Brandon Judd. Brandon told us that, this year, individuals from 151 different countries were processed at the Donna Processing Facility. This is one processing facility in Donna, TX, in the Rio Grande Valley. Last year, they processed people from 151 different countries.

A couple of weeks ago, Customs and Border Protection at the Laredo Port of Entry made a seizure of hard narcotics worth more than \$3.5 million of street value. This wasn't from an entire week's worth of drug interdictions; this came from two vehicles that they stopped. One had 20 pounds of cocaine in it; the other had more than 167 pounds of methamphetamine.

This strain on law enforcement poses serious risks to our entire country. The criminals, the drugs, the weapons, and other illegal goods that cross our border are heading to every corner of the United States. And if you think they are stopping at the border, think again. They are traveling to all 50 of the United States.

And while unaccompanied children have become the face of this crisis, there is a ripple effect that extends far and wide. Border Patrol, ultimately, doesn't have the capacity to provide safe and thorough care for these children and patrol our borders and interdict dangerous substances and enforce our laws. Agents are spread a mile wide and an inch deep, and something has got to change.

This is where the Bipartisan Border Solutions Act comes in. We provide for two major changes in the way that migrants are processed to alleviate the strain on law enforcement and improve the way we process and care for migrants when they are in our custody. One, the bill establishes at least four regional processing centers in high-traffic areas. It is, in effect, a “one stop shop” for the various government Agencies involved in processing migrants. CBP, Customs and Border Pro-

tection; ICE, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency; the USCIS, U.S. Customs and Immigration Service; and the Office of Refugee Resettlement will all be housed under a single roof.

Migrants can receive medical screenings, have their identities verified, and go through a criminal history check all in one place. And then they will begin the legal process of seeking asylum if, in fact, that is what they are doing. They will complete their asylum interviews, go through legal orientation so they know their rights, and receive the documents and information they need to appear for their future court date in front of an immigration judge.

Our bill also addresses the staffing shortages that have made this situation much more challenging. It requires the hiring of hundreds of CBP officers and Border Patrol processing coordinators so agents can get back on the frontlines. In other words, these processing coordinators aren't going to be Border Patrol agents who are highly trained law enforcement officers. We want them back on the frontlines. But if it comes to processing the migrants and preparing the paperwork, we believe these processing coordinators can help.

Our legislation also calls for 150 new immigration judge teams, 300 asylum officers, ICE litigation teams, and other personnel to help adjudicate these asylum claims.

Right now, the system is completely overwhelmed, and that is exactly what the human smugglers—what we call the coyotes—are planning on. Everybody in Texas along the border, everybody in Arizona, and everybody who lives or works along the border understands what is happening. Again, that is why it would be so instructive for Vice President HARRIS to actually go to the border.

In order to gain a handle on the mass movement of migrants, we need to make these commonsense changes. When it comes to children, it is not enough to ensure they are safely processed by Border Patrol and then transferred to Health and Human Services' custody. We also need to make sure these children are safe after they have been placed with sponsors in the United States and told to appear for a future court hearing. In most cases, children are released to parents or other relatives, but not always.

HHS reports that in 2021, more than 1,000 children have been released to unrelated individuals or distant relatives they don't even know. While these may be legitimate caretakers, it can also open the door for these children to be exploited or trafficked.

In 2014, the Office of Refugee Resettlement placed eight children with members of a human trafficking ring who posed as family or friends. These children were forced to work on an egg farm in Ohio for no pay for 12 hours a

day, 6 or 7 days a week. They lived in deplorable conditions, and they were threatened with violence if they didn't comply. These distant relatives, unbeknownst to these children, and these unrelated individuals are a big cause for concern, but not the only one.

Before a child is released into the custody of anyone—a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle—this person must be thoroughly vetted by the Federal Government because we simply can't hand a child over to somebody who is going to be a danger to them. There is no vetting requirement, though, for other people who live in the same home. And those of us who have dealt with the scourge of child abuse know that about anybody living in the same home with a minor child—particularly, an unaccompanied child who has undergone the trauma of moving from Central America to the United States is going to be a potential victim.

You can have a trustworthy individual identified as taking care of the child, but abuse could be happening under the roof by another person who lives there. Why do we say that? Because, sadly, it happens all the time. Or, heaven forbid, the parent or the relative is the one who decides to exploit the child themselves.

What is being done to prevent this abuse? As it turns out, not a lot by the Federal Government. The Health and Human Services Department requires safety and well-being check-in calls to be made to sponsors within 30 days after a child has been released. But in 2021 alone, the data shows that 18 percent, nearly one in five children, could not be reached after 30 days. Phone calls were not answered. Door knocks were not responded to. And that means that hundreds of children released to the care of these adults in the United States on our watch are lost to the system. We don't know if they are in a safe home or if they are a victim of trafficking or abuse, or whether they have simply disappeared, whether they have been recruited into a gang. The U.S. Government simply does not know where they are and what is happening to them. This is a national scandal.

Senator SINEMA and I are committed to passing this legislation that provides these critical protections for these children who already have endured a lot of pain and suffering—a lot more than any child should.

Our bill would require criminal background checks, not only for the child's sponsor but for any other adult living in the household. It will bar children from being placed in the custody of anyone who has been convicted of sex offenses, domestic violence, human trafficking, child abuse, or other serious crimes. The U.S. Government simply can't check a box once they have placed a child with a sponsor in the United States. After the initial 30-day checkup, we require another 60-day checkup—as a matter of fact, every 60 days.

Protections for children, streamlined processes, more personnel—these are commonsense reforms that will address the most urgent issues currently on our southern border.

Bipartisanship, as we know, is in short supply these days, especially when it comes to the debate surrounding immigration and border security. We have folks in both parties and in both Chambers of Congress lined up behind this particular bill. I hope we can add more bipartisan cosponsors.

Our bill has already been endorsed by a broad range of law enforcement, immigration, and business groups—for example, the National Border Patrol Council, National Immigration Forum, and U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. I could go on and on.

As I have said before, and I will say again in closing, if anybody has a better idea, I am all ears. But, right now, all we hear is crickets. No one is offering any bipartisan, bicameral solutions—anything close to what we have described here. This isn't meant to be comprehensive immigration reform. It is a targeted solution to the most urgent problems at hand.

I would be happy to offer this legislation to Vice President HARRIS or President Biden as a solution to the crisis on our southern border. I am happy to meet with them. Senator SINEMA, I am sure, feels the same, and Congressman CUELLAR and Congressman GONZALEZ.

We are interested in fixing the problem, not scoring political points, and we can't afford to wait years or maybe even decades to see the circumstances in Central America change. After all, then-Vice President Biden was tapped to solve this identical problem by President Obama. Let me say that again: Vice President Biden was tapped to solve this identical problem by President Obama. Not only was he unsuccessful, but, as we know, it has gotten worse since that time.

We need urgent action to address the crisis we are experiencing today at our Nation's border and the Bipartisan Border Solutions Act is an important first step.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Iowa.

INFLATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, when I was first elected to Congress in the 1970s, I ran as "Grassley, the inflation fighter." Inflation was about 12 or 13 percent at that time. When I ran for the Senate, it was 12 or 13 percent again, and it hasn't been a major problem since then.

Those who remember that time of high inflation know that it is a time period when inflation was a real problem. It kneecaps middle-class prosperity and causes severe hardships for those already struggling. Inflation is nothing short of a regressive tax, as it hurts Americans more the less money that they have.

It is a stealth tax. With the income tax, you can see how much the government is taking out of your paycheck.

With a sales tax, you can see on your receipt what the government took for its cut. With inflation, the value of the dollar in your pocket is reduced without even leaving your billfold.

When Americans suddenly notice that it costs more to buy the same groceries, it can be hard to know whom to blame. Did the store just decide to raise prices or is inflation caused by mysterious economic forces beyond anyone's control?

In reality, the Federal Government can directly cause inflation by printing too much money to feed its spending habits. Politicians like to promise freebies that someone else will pay for—maybe "the rich" will pay.

Who is "the rich," you might ask. "Don't worry; it is not you," the big spenders assure us.

Well, don't be so sure. President Biden suggested that if rich people pay their fair share of taxes, we can afford to spend another \$4 to \$6 trillion. Now, in reality, if the government confiscated all the wealth of all the U.S. billionaires, it wouldn't cover that bill. Just asking them to pay a little bit more, as the President suggests, will barely make a dent.

So who is going to pay the bill? Don't be fooled. Each American is going to pay that bill. Hard-working Americans will be shouldering the costs of Biden's spending plans in the form of lower wages or higher prices at the gas pump or the checkout lines at Hy-Vee in Cedar Falls, IA.

Remember, prior to the pandemic, tax reform and a more predictable regulatory environment contributed to the best economy America had seen in decades. Yes, prior to the pandemic, as a result of the policies of regulatory reform and of the tax bill of 2017, we did end up with the best economy America had seen in 50 years. Unemployment reached a 50-year low. Family incomes and workers' wages experienced robust gains. In fact, wage growth was strongest for low-wage workers. As a result, income inequality actually declined.

My colleagues across the aisle like to repeat the falsehood that tax reform was just "tax cuts for the rich"—not true. We eliminated loopholes that allowed some favored corporations to avoid millions in taxes. By having more corporations paying their fair share, we were able to lower the overall corporate rate to be more in line with other countries, like Sweden or Denmark.

Tax reform meant more investments in America, creating good-paying jobs for hard-working Americans.

The pre-pandemic thriving economy is poised now to come roaring back if the government just gets out of the way. Raising tax rates while adding new giveaways for Democrats' favored corporations that sign onto the Green New Deal will kill the goose that laid the golden egg.

While President Biden talks a good game about everyone paying their fair share, he is proposing an unprecedented spending binge. This will only